



# Youth Protection

<b>Policy Number</b>	2-005.2
<b>Responsible Authority</b>	Assistant Vice President, Compliance and Ethics
<b>Initiating Authority</b>	Vice President for University Compliance, Ethics, and Risk
<b>Effective Date</b>	12/7/2023
<b>Date of Origin</b>	12/20/2018

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## APPLICABILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

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This policy applies to all University of Central Florida (UCF) and UCF direct support organization (DSO) employees and volunteers working with minors in a program sponsored or operated by the university, regardless of the program location. This policy also applies to all third parties conducting programs involving minors while on university property.

Except for the statutorily mandated reporting requirements outlined in the Procedures Section VI. below, this policy will not apply to the following:

1. Events open to the public where guardians or chaperones are invited or expected to accompany and supervise minors;
  2. Field trips or visits supervised by a minor's school or organization;
  3. Patient-care activities relating to minors;
  4. Recruited student-athlete "official visits" involving minors;
  5. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved research involving minors;
  6. Minors who are employed by or volunteering/interning for the university (refer to [UCF Policy 3-128 University Volunteers](#) for requirements);
  7. Minors who are enrolled, dually enrolled, or accepted for enrollment at the university (including courses offered through the UCF Division of Continuing Education); or
  8. Licensed childcare facilities on campus.
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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The university hosts a variety of academic, recreational, and service programs that engage minors. All programs vary significantly, and specific policies and procedures are most effective if tailored to the complexity and scale of each program. The purpose of the policy is to explain the university's minimum standards and expectations for providing a safe environment for all minors.

Additionally, Section 39.201, Florida Statutes, mandates that any person who knows of or suspects child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to report it to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). The statute lists persons particularly responsible for reporting. As an

institution that places priority on safety, the university has created this policy to ensure employees, volunteers, students, and third parties abide by these laws.

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

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UCF is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all programs associated with the university. This policy sets forth UCF's expectations for the protection of minors and outlines the required procedures for background screening, training, and registering of programs involving minors. These procedures are in place to ensure all persons understand how to minimize the threat of child abuse and neglect, recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect, and respond promptly and effectively should child abuse and neglect be observed, suspected, or disclosed. University Compliance and Ethics is responsible for overseeing compliance with this policy. Every program covered by this policy must have a program sponsor who is responsible for meeting all background screening, training, and registration requirements.

All individuals working (whether for pay or as a volunteer) for UCF or a UCF DSO who sponsors or participates in an applicable program that involves minors, must act in accordance with this policy and the accompanying procedures. Any third-party organization conducting programs involving minors while on university property must also act in accordance with this policy and the accompanying procedures.

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## **DEFINITIONS**

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**Care, Custody, and Control.** When an individual has primary responsibility for supervision of minors at any given point throughout the program involving minors.

**Child Abuse or Neglect.** Infliction of physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a minor.

**Mandated Reporter.** As specified in Section 39.201, Florida Statutes, any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare required to report to such knowledge or suspicion to DCF. Certain university employees are required to provide their names under state law. Reporter names will remain confidential and exempt from public disclosure in accordance with and subject to Section 39.202, Florida Statutes.

**Minor.** Any unmarried person under the age of 18 who has not been emancipated by order of the court.

**Program.** An event or activity sponsored or operated by the university where minors are under the care, custody and control of university or DSO employees or volunteers, including but not limited to summer, vacation, and after school camps, classes, clubs, organizations and groups,

regardless of subject matter or academic or non-academic character of the organized activity (i.e., whether recreational, athletic, academic, artistic, or social). The definition of Program also includes third party events or activities involving minors that are hosted on university property.

**Program Sponsor.** The person primarily responsible for the operational management and oversight of a Program involving minors.

**Program Staff.** Any person responsible for the care, custody, and control of a minor throughout a program.

**Third Party.** An individual or organization, external to the university, which operates a Program that involves minors on the university's property. For purposes of this policy, third party includes a student organization registered with the university.

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## PROCEDURES

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### I. Designation of Program Sponsor

Every Program must have a designated Program Sponsor who is responsible for monitoring that all Program Staff meet background screening, training, and registration requirements.

### II. Background Screening Requirements

Eligibility to work with minors will be determined by DCF. All Program Sponsors and Program Staff must successfully pass a level two background screening in accordance with [UCF Policy 3-011 Background Checks](#).

Screenings are required to be completed at least once every five years to remain in compliance with Section 39.001, Florida Statutes, and industry standard. If there is a break in service for longer than 90 days, the individual must be screened and cleared again, prior to returning to work with minors. UCF also reserves the right to conduct screenings at any time after a Program has begun.

Volunteers who assist on an intermittent basis for less than 10 hours per month need not be screened, as long as a person who meets the level two screening requirement is always present and has the volunteer within sight.

If the background screening results indicate an individual is not eligible to work with minors, the individual may submit to DCF an Intent to Apply for an Exemption from Disqualification form through [DCF's website](#). Documentation issued by DCF indicating an approval of exemption must be submitted to UCF Central Human Resources prior to working with minors.

Third-party Program Sponsors must obtain State of Florida Level 2 background check clearances directly through the State of Florida. Once all required background checks have been completed, Program Sponsors must electronically sign the Third-Party Program Background Check Certification Consent Form within the Squire Youth Program Registration Portal (Squire Portal) prior to the start of the Program.

Program Sponsors are responsible for ensuring all Program Staff complete the level two background screening process at least five business days prior to the Program start date.

### **III. Youth Protection Program Training Requirements; Youth Protection Program Staff Code of Conduct**

The university created a training course that must be completed by all Program Sponsors and Program Staff. Training consists of an online course that details pertinent information about this policy and recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. Program Sponsors and Program Staff must successfully complete the training course through the Squire Portal, with a score of 90 percent or 90/100 or higher on the post-test, at least five business days prior to the Program start date. The online training course must be completed every two years to remain compliant with this policy.

Program Sponsors and Program Staff responsible for overnight supervision of minors are required to complete an additional Overnight Staff Training course through the Squire Portal, with a score of 90 percent or 90/100 or higher on the post-test, at least five business days prior to the Program start date. The online Overnight Staff Training course must be completed every year to remain compliant with this policy.

Program Sponsors are also responsible for ensuring that all Program Staff certify to their understanding of the Youth Protection Program Staff Code of Conduct through the Squire Portal at least five business days prior to the Program start date.

### **IV. Program Registration**

All Programs subject to this policy must be registered with University Compliance and Ethics. The Program Sponsor is responsible for registering the Program at least 45 days prior to the Program start date through the Squire Portal. A recurring Program must re-register on an annual basis.

As part of the registration process, the Program Sponsor must submit the following information:

- a. Program name, session title, Program description, date(s) and time(s), and location, and university facilities or outdoor space being utilized if applicable. If the Program is being held virtually, the software platform being used must be indicated.
- b. Overnight stay details, if applicable.
- c. Program Sponsor's contact information.
- d. Primary Contact(s) for the Program, if different than the Program Sponsor.
- e. A list of all Program Staff, including email and phone number.
- f. A list of all participating minors, including date of birth, address, and emergency contact information. The final list of minor participants must be submitted within five days after the Program start date.
- g. A Safety Plan indicating how the Program will respond to emergency situations, including but not limited to inclement weather, a missing minor, and illness or injuries.

Once the registration has been submitted, University Compliance and Ethics will review the information and communicate any deficiencies to the Program Sponsor. All Program registrations must be reviewed and marked as approved through the Squire Portal prior to the start of the Program.

### **V. Camp Insurance and SAFE Form Submission**

- a. All Programs subject to this policy must obtain camp insurance in accordance with UCF Policy 3-110 University Insurance and provide proof of such with their Program

registration through the Squire Portal.

- i. Programs hosted or sponsored by UCF must submit a completed UCF Camp Insurance Form with the Program registration within Squire, which is forwarded to the Office of Enterprise Risk and Insurance for processing ([riskmanagement@ucf.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@ucf.edu)).
  - ii. Programs hosted by third party organizations on university property must upload to their Program registration a valid Certificate of Insurance in accordance with the requirements set forth in [UCF Policy 3-110 University Insurance](#).
- b. All Programs operating on campus that meet the definition of a potentially hazardous event as defined in university [Regulation UCF-4.025 Potentially Hazardous Events](#), including events sponsored by UCF staff, faculty, departments/offices, registered student organizations and third party organizations must complete the [Safety Action For Event Form](#) and receive approval prior to the start of the Program.

## VI. Reporting and Responding to Abuse

All UCF and UCF DSO employees and volunteers are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, as defined by Chapter 39 F.S., and must comply with Florida's mandated reporting laws. These laws require any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused or neglected, to report such knowledge or suspicion to DCF, regardless of where it occurs.

In addition, any Florida College System institution, state university, or nonpublic college, university, or school, as defined in subsection 39.205(3) or sections 1000.21 or 1005.02 F.S., whose administrators knowingly and willfully, upon receiving information from faculty, staff, or other institution employees, fail to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect committed on the property of the university, college, or school, or during an event or function sponsored by the university, college, or school, or who knowingly and willfully prevent another person from doing so, shall be subject to fines of one million dollars for each failure.

For the university to meet its obligations, all Program Sponsors and Program Staff are required to follow the reporting steps below if the person suspects, has been informed of, or witnesses child abuse or neglect:

1. Remove the child from immediate harm and call 9-1-1, if directly witnessed.
2. Report the abuse or neglect to the Florida DCF Hotline using one of the following:
  - a) Telephone: 1-800-962-2873; Florida Relay 711 or TTY: 1-800-955-8771
  - b) Fax: 1-800-914-0004
  - c) Online via the [Florida DCF website](#)
3. Report the abuse or neglect to the UCF IntegrityLine using one of the following:
  - a) Telephone: 855-877-6049
  - b) Online via the [IntegrityLine website](#)

Once the university is informed of child abuse or neglect, it will commence an institutional response. Depending on the nature of the abuse reported, University Compliance and Ethics, or the Office of Institutional Equity, per [UCF Policy 2-004 Nondiscrimination Policy](#), will conduct an investigation as well as review the need for increased supervision, revised policies and procedures, and determine if additional training is necessary. Should the investigation yield that

criminal activity has taken place, the appropriate law enforcement authorities will be notified.

## **VII. Enforcement**

University Compliance and Ethics will strictly enforce this policy. Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy and any related campus procedures may result in suspension or cancellation of the Program, corrective action, up to and including termination of employment, dismissal from the university, issuance of a no-trespass notice(s), and/or disqualification from participation in future activities.

Knowingly making a false report or complaint under this policy, or knowingly providing false or intentionally misleading information during an investigation, may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment and/or dismissal from the university.

Third party noncompliance with this policy may result in action up to and including discontinuation of use, including debarment from future use, of university owned or controlled property or facilities and/or suspension or cancellation of the Program. The university may also take necessary interim actions before determining whether a violation has occurred.

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## **RELATED INFORMATION or DOCUMENTS**

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[University Regulation UCF-4.0292 Potentially Hazardous Events](#)

[UCF Policy 2-004 Nondiscrimination Policy](#)

[UCF Policy 2-700 Reporting Misconduct and Protection from Retaliation](#)

[UCF Policy 3-011 Background Checks](#)

[UCF Policy 3-110 University Insurance](#)

[UCF Policy 3-128 University Volunteers](#)

[SAFE Form](#)

[Youth Protection Program Website](#)

[Youth Protection Safety Plan Template](#)

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## **CONTACTS**

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University Compliance and Ethics  
4365 Andromeda Loop N., MH 396, Orlando, FL 32816  
[complianceandethics@ucf.edu](mailto:complianceandethics@ucf.edu)  
[University Compliance and Ethics Website](#)

**POLICY APPROVAL**  
**(For use by the Office of the President)**

Policy Number: 2-005.2



Initiating Authority and University Policies and  
Procedures Committee Chair

Date: 11/29/2023



President or Designee

Date: 12/7/2023

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